

the Roadrunner

Nebraska ♦ Department ♦ of ♦ Roads

December 2008/January 2009

Happy Holidays



the Roadrunner

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Nebraska Department of Roads

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Governor Dave Heineman

Highway Commission

| | |
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| John Kingsbury | Greg Wolford |
| Donna Wanitschke | Jerome Fagerland |

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| | |
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| Deputy Director | John Jacobsen |
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| | |
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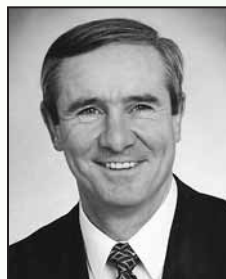
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The information in this newsletter is contributed
by employees, retirees and friends of NDOR.



From the Director

2008-2009 Meeting the Challenges



John L. Craig

As we enter another holiday season, it is a time to also reflect and prepare for the next year. The department is well into that process as we seek to continuously improve.

The Nebraska Department of Roads is the state surface transportation agency with modal programs in highways, rail, and public transportation. As such, there are several questions one can ask of this agency. What is the mission? What are our measures of success? Is work done as efficiently and effectively as possible? Can costs be further reduced? Are we transparent? Are we serving the

customer (taxpayer)? Do we have the public trust? Can things be made safer? Can they be made more environmentally compatible? How do we determine our economic impact? What are the best priorities? These are underlying questions that manifest in my thinking.

They are also challenges we continue to address. We are simultaneously performance-based, partners and leaders. As such, I will discuss some of the challenges, issues and goals surrounding these subjects.

These past few years have seen many adjustments and changes and this will likely continue for the foreseeable future. We have revised our needs criteria and standards for roads to further align with those of American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). This is a result of our Systems Preservation Optimization Team (SPOT). We are in the process of completing a revision of our methodology for allocating funds for system preservation and for how we prioritize capital improvements. This is being accomplished by our Funding Distribution Team (FDT), and we are transitioning toward a complete implementation expected as early as 2010.

The Fleet Asset Study Team (FAST) has completed their charter and has made recommendations on how we can better manage our equipment fleet. Our Business Technology Support Division is maturing in an effort to provide the best "IT" support possible to the department. There are also a myriad of other challenges and successes.

A Crossroad

We are at a crossroad as we endeavor to make the wisest and best use of public tax dollars in an environment of uncertain revenues and increasing inflation. Congress has passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) through March 6, 2009, which provides \$70 million of the \$120 million to accomplish our current \$317 million program. The authorization in SAFETEA-LU provides the opportunity for an additional estimated \$63 million to NDOR. There is a parallel aspect for cities and counties as well. Such is the instability of funding and the concomitant budget challenges that go with it. So, what should we focus on? First and foremost, stay focused on our mission and our state Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) goals of safety, mobility and environmental stewardship with an eye on improving our Corporate Performance Measures.

Safety – In conjunction with our many partners, we have done a good job over the years of reducing public fatalities, injuries and crashes. I am especially proud that work zone crashes have been reduced by over 65 percent in the past nine years, and accomplishing this during a time when our highway program, projects and exposure were the highest ever. This is a remarkable achievement for which

all should be justifiably proud. Considering this liability exposure, a strong safety position serves to not only protect human life, but the funding for infrastructure and other needs as the department is currently self-insured.

As priority number one in the LRTP, we have established, in conjunction with our partners, a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) with a goal of reducing fatalities to 1.0 per one hundred million vehicle miles traveled (MVMT) by 2011. We are on track to meet this goal in 2008, with concomitant savings to the estimated over \$2 billion societal cost annually due to crashes. I am committed to three areas again this year. First, to continue to meet our SHSP goal. Second, to finalize development of an automated crash (accident) reporting system so that law enforcement at all levels and other partners can use this technology. The Accident Records Section of Traffic Engineering Division has made good progress in this initiative with their current communications with the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Nebraska Criminal Justice Information System, the Crime Commission, and the State Patrol. Third, further improve recognition of teams and partners that have made a substantial contribution toward meeting the SHSP goal. Remember, the best way to lose good behavior and performance is to ignore it. The corollary is, the best way to get good behavior and performance is to recognize it. So, let's recognize it.

Mobility – This, and the infrastructure required, has historically been our “bread and butter” whether measured by time or money invested. Of the three LRTP goals under mobility (build, preserve, operate), our first priority is to continue to preserve the \$7.5 billion asset of roads and associated infrastructure in which Nebraskans have invested. Our chartered SPOT and FDT, as previously mentioned, have been central to this effort. Already, the originally estimated annual cost of system preservation has increased from \$170 to \$220 million this next

year. Inflation of from 10-24 percent a year has been the principal reason. In spite of these challenges, the Reason Foundation report of 2008 entitled the “17th Annual Report on the Performance of State Highway Systems (1984-2006),” reflects that the department has improved its ranking from 29th in 2000 to 8th in 2006 in the cost-effectiveness of the state highway system. We are also finishing a three-year effort to improve our bridge inventory system, including inspecting and load rating nearly all of the 16,000 bridges in the state.

In addition, we have expanded our involvement in the real and near-real time management of the highway system through our Operations Centers and in conjunction with our partners. This effort is to maximize the capacity of our existing infrastructure at less expense than building additional infrastructure and is second only to the importance of system preservation. Our evolving District Operations Centers are a significant contribution toward making this happen. System preservation and operations are thus key efforts in spending taxpayer dollars as wisely as possible to get the most capacity out of existing infrastructure.

I am again committed to three initiatives to improve this overall mobility goal. First, to complete implementation of our revised funding allocation and prioritization methodology. Second, to complete the development of a program to certify maintenance and construction management personnel. Third, to further improve recognition of teams and partners for outstanding performance.

Environmental Stewardship – This arena has continued to increase, both in time and money expended. As we develop the manmade environment, we have begun to balance that with equal attention to the natural environment. Our mission is to sustain the balance between the natural and manmade environments. In an effort to further improve in this area, I continue to be committed to three goals. First, to complete our Environ-

mental Management System. Second, to meet all of our environmental commitments. Third, to improve recognition of those that make a substantial contribution toward environmental stewardship.

Other Challenges

Data Communications – As we leverage technology to our advantage in providing products and services in this fast paced world, we will continue our efforts to improve data communications bandwidth and speed to our sites across the state as availability becomes more prevalent and technology improvements make it possible. We are a part of “Network Nebraska.”

Partnerships – We all need to find a better way to work together in serving our customers (the public). Working with our contractors, as well as others, has developed several initiatives to improve our working relationships and processes.

Elected Officials – The officials at all levels reflect our republican form of democracy (the “people” electing their representatives to determine public policy, to include funding). To that extent, it is in our best interests to have these elected officials as well informed as possible. We continue, and must improve, our efforts with our congressional delegation, governor, state legislature, cities and counties to inform and educate them on a regular basis.

Federal Agency Requirements – The department, cities and counties are experiencing significant adjustments regarding eligibility, environmental compliance, bridge inventory and right-of-way acquisition. More specifically, improving our oversight of Local Public Agency (LPA) projects has become priority #1 for me. I solicit your support as we meet this challenge as it may impact every aspect of our department. These adjustments will likely continue for the foreseeable future. We will continue to work closely with FHWA in this area.

The department is also working with other partners to accelerate the environmental processing time for

See **Crossroad** on next page

Traynowicz Named New Bridge Engineer

Mark Traynowicz is the new Bridge Engineer for the Nebraska Department of Roads. Traynowicz, a licensed professional engineer, succeeds former Bridge Engineer Lyman Freeman.

For 18 years, Traynowicz has worked at the Roads Department in a variety of capacities, including Bridge Design Engineer and Geotechnical Engineer in Bridge Division; Research Engineer in Materials & Research Division; and Assistant Construction Engineer in Construction Division. In 2006, he was named District One Construction Engineer, his most recent position at NDOR.

Born and raised in Bellevue, Nebraska, Traynowicz graduated from



Mark Traynowicz

Bellevue West High School in 1980. After earning his Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the UNL in 1985, Traynowicz played professional football for five seasons with the Buffalo Bills and Phoenix Cardinals. In 1990 he began his career at NDOR.

Over his tenure at NDOR, Traynowicz said he most enjoys the many fine people he works with, both at central headquarters and throughout the state. He appreciates the pride they take in the work that they do.

In discussing goals he would like to achieve in his new position, Traynowicz noted, "I want to support

the Bridge Division team so we can continue to offer excellent service and communication to our customers, both internal and external. We want to continue to be known as one of the premier bridge divisions throughout the United States."

Traynowicz said his management approach is to provide people with the proper tools, encourage them and empower them to do the work and make decisions to support the strategic mission and goals for NDOR.

Traynowicz and his wife, Alison, have two sons, Kramer, 16, a junior at Lincoln Southwest High School, and Cole, 14, a freshman at Lincoln Southwest. In his spare time, Mark enjoys attending Husker football games and other UNL sporting events, high school sporting events, fishing, gardening and playing video games with his sons. ♦

Crossroad *(cont'd. from page 3)*

Corps of Engineers 404 permits as a means of accelerating project delivery while meeting our environmental commitments.

People – It is all about people. This is the truth of human society. Our people and, by extension, our partners are our most important resource. Relationships "rule the world" and is equally true internal to the department and externally with those whom we work, especially our customers (the public). Leadership and skill development—I put a premium on leadership since it is all about people. I want to further develop our leadership through challenges, experiences, training and opportunities. Continued focus on succession planning is key to this. We must also develop the best skilled workforce possible at all levels. We must continue to recognize outstanding performance, internal and external, to the department. It almost always has a more positive impact than any of us know.

I also want to support our individual and collective "wellness" as follows:

- **Physical** – Improve health, prevent disease and work toward lowering health care costs. Literally, and figuratively, if you have your health, you have everything. As a part of this, I want to continue to improve the safety of our employees and partners.
- **Mental** – This is primarily the arena of education, workforce, talent, innovation, problem-solving and feeling good that we are doing meaningful work – the human mind. We have a vested interest with our partners, external and internal, in this effort. Our recognition program is a key part of this for our own employees and our partners.
- **Financial** – This is a vital component of each individual's overall collective wellness. Providing education, training and planning tools on financial health, offered both through the state's benefit programs and

other avenues, can help individuals achieve their short- and long-term goals to ensure their financial health.

All department employees, and our many partners, should be justifiably proud of our many accomplishments. We are performing at the highest level on record and the department is doing that with the fewest employees in 50 years. This is a remarkable achievement, especially given the many challenges we face. But, the work never ends. It is what we do. I take great pride in being associated with all of you.

I want to extend my best wishes to all of you and your families for a safe and happy holiday season and new year. Together, 2009 will be another great year. Thank you and stay safe!

John L. Craig
Director

Nebraska Residents Give NDOR a 94% Approval Rating in Latest Customer Satisfaction Survey

By Brad Zumwalt
Highway Planning Manager

The Department of Roads' (NDOR) overall rating soared to 94% in the latest customer satisfaction survey of Nebraska residents. The telephone survey, conducted by Bureau of Sociological Research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, was completed in August 2008 and resulted in a total of 1,811 responses. NDOR has conducted this survey every three or four years since 1997.

The table below shows the "positive" scores for each of the customer satisfaction questions on the survey and compares these scores in subsequent years. The average satisfaction rating was 90%. In addition to achieving a

94% positive score in its overall image, NDOR shone throughout the survey. Eighty-four percent of the respondents believe NDOR does a good job of building and maintaining the state highway system and 90% say they are very or somewhat satisfied with the snow and ice removal by NDOR employees. Nearly eight in ten Nebraskans (78%) are satisfied with the condition of roads in the state highway system.

NDOR's strategic goal of providing safe highways is apparent in the results of the survey. More than nine in ten Nebraskans (93%) are very or somewhat satisfied with NDOR providing a safe transportation system. The vast majority also feel safe in

construction work zones with 86% reporting they feel very or somewhat safe driving through these areas, up 6% from the previous survey.

Fifty-three percent of the respondents stopped at a Nebraska rest area in the past 12 months. Among those who visited a rest area, 94% feel very or somewhat safe (the highest score to date) and 91% rate Nebraska rest areas equal to or superior to those in other states.

Throughout the survey, the real shining stars were NDOR employees. Ninety-five percent of the respondents had a favorable or very favorable impression of our employees. This percentage has steadily risen over

See **Approval Rating** on page 13

| Nebraska Resident Satisfaction Survey Results 1997-2008 <i>"Positive" Rating Shown</i> | | | | | Change from 2004 | Change from 1997 or 2001 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Question | 1997 | 2001 | 2004 | 2008 | | |
| Thinking about the highways in the state of Nebraska, how satisfied are you with the "condition" of these roads? (% Satisfied Shown) | 78% | 77% | 79% | 78% | -1% | 0% |
| Thinking of just the major highway routes of the state, how satisfied are you with snow and ice removal by the Department of Roads? (% Satisfied Shown) | 89% | 85% | 89% | 90% | 1% | 1% |
| Thinking only of the employees of the Department of Roads, not those of highway contractors, the county, or the city, what is your overall impression of the employees of the Department of Roads? (% Favorable Shown) | 90% | 92% | 93% | 95% | 2% | 5% |
| Would you say the employee was very courteous, somewhat courteous, not very courteous, or not at all courteous? (% Courteous Shown) | 92% | 95% | 95% | 95% | -0.5% | 3% |
| The Department of Roads is doing a good job of building and maintaining the state highway system. (% Agree/Strongly Agree Shown) | 86% | 88% | 85% | 84% | -1% | -2% |
| Thinking only of state highways, how satisfied are you with the Department of Roads in providing you with a safe transportation system? (% Satisfied Shown) | N/A | 93% | 95% | 93% | -2% | 0% |
| How safe do you feel when you have to drive through a construction work zone on Nebraska highways? (% Very/Somewhat Safe Shown) | N/A | 83% | 80% | 86% | 6% | 3% |
| How safe do you feel when using one of Nebraska's I-80 rest areas? (% Very/Somewhat Safe Shown) | N/A | 91% | 90% | 94% | 4% | 3% |
| How useful was the video display at Nebraska rest areas to you? (% Very/Somewhat Useful Shown) | N/A | 95% | 96% | 92% | -4% | -3% |
| Overall, how would you compare Nebraska's I-80 rest areas to rest areas in other states? (% Equal To or Better Than Other States Shown) | N/A | 92% | 93% | 91% | -2% | -1% |
| Overall, would you say your feelings about the Department of Roads are generally very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, or very negative? (% Positive Shown) | N/A | 93% | 92% | 94% | 2% | 1% |
| NDOR Performance Measure Satisfaction Score (average positive score for above questions) | 87% | 89% | 90% | 90% | 0% | 3% |
| Total Number of Respondents to Survey | 1,775 | 1,857 | 1,820 | 1,811 | | |

Hudson-Meng Bison Bonebed

By Craig Lind
District 5 Engineer

While on vacation last summer, I visited the Hudson-Meng Museum & Archaeology Research Center (also known as the Hudson-Meng Bison Bonebed), located in the shadow of Nebraska's picturesque Pine Ridge in Crawford. It is the world's largest Alberta Culture bison kill site and bonebed.

The story of the bonebed is mysterious and exciting. When Albert Meng was preparing to build a pond in the early 1950s, he uncovered bones weathering out of an eroding bank. Meng and his friend, Bill Hudson, sought professional advice to see if the bones were important to science. After several years and many setbacks, the two men lent their names to this historic site, where scientific excavations revealed an extinct species of bison, larger than the buffalo we see today.

Over 10,000 years ago, hundreds of bison were killed mysteriously at this ancient spring. No one knows exactly what killed the 600 bison, but artifacts including spear points from the

Alberta culture have been found in the skeletal remains at the site. The Alberta culture lived 8,000 to 10,000 years ago and the bison was their main way of survival. Several theories exist about what killed the bison. You might picture hundreds of bison being driven over a cliff; however, there is only a gentle rise near the site. Others have proposed that the bison may have been killed by suffocation in a prairie fire while huddled for protection or they may have been killed by lightning.

Ongoing excavations may be viewed by the public when they are in session. Interpretive displays and guided tours help visitors understand why this is such an important discovery and encourage theories about what happened to the bison. Due to remoteness of the site and low visitation during certain times, visitors are advised to check in advance for museum hours.



Photo by Craig Lind, District 5 Engineer

Excavations have uncovered bones of more than 600 bison at the Hudson-Meng Bison Bonebed in Crawford.

The Hudson-Meng Bison Bonebed site overlooks the Oglala and Buffalo Gap National Grasslands and on north to the Black Hills of South Dakota. It's only a few miles to the moonscape of Toadstool Geologic Park. The site is enrolled on the National Register of Historic Places. ♦

If you have visited an out of the way place in Nebraska that you think would be of interest, please submit your ideas to linda.wilson@nebraska.gov for "Off the Beaten Path."

A look into the life of an NDOR employee

Going Out On Patrol

By Judy Schoenfeldt
District 3

Brian Bussey works for the Department of Roads in District 3 out of Norfolk as a Highway Construction Tech III. Since June 2007, aside from work, he is a part-time Deputy Sheriff for the Pierce County Sheriff's office on Friday and Saturday nights. Brian has prior experience as a military policeman in the United States Army Reserve. He received his certification for Civilian Law Enforcement at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center in Grand Island after coming back from a 10-month military deployment in Kosovo in 2000. Brian was also deployed to Iraq and Fort Riley, Kansas for 21 months in 2003 and 2004.

Brian was an Army Corrections Officer administering POW camps in Kosovo and Iraq. He also worked in corrections at the United States Disciplinary Barracks (U.S.D.B.) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

"Most law enforcement officers have never been shot at or had to return fire and don't truly know how they will react when the time comes. I've been there and don't question my responses. The vast majority of the job is public relations and dealing with people, often in very stressful and difficult circumstances. It can try your patience to its limits." ♦



Brian Bussey

NDOR's Randy Peters Lectures with Smithsonian Scholars

By Linda Wilson
Communication Division

Simply stated, it was an "opportunity of a lifetime." Randy Peters' description of his recent participation in the "Smithsonian Scholars in the Schools" program is not an exaggeration when you consider the facts: The Nebraska Department of Roads' Planning & Project Development Division Engineer was one of three "world-class scholars" selected from the prestigious Smithsonian Institution to share their knowledge and enthusiasm for learning with students, teachers and the school community.

The task at hand: Research, prepare and give a one-hour multi-media presentation on major themes in highway transportation. Another prerequisite was to make it educational, yet interesting, to the primary target audience: 17-year-olds.

Peters noted that Omaha's Durham Museum, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, has hosted several Smithsonian scholars in the past four years. This year, a traveling exhibition, "Eyewitness: American Originals from the National Archives," was developed by the National Archives and scheduled for display at the Durham October 4, 2008 through January 4, 2009. The exhibition features first-hand accounts of significant moments in history that changed the U.S., American society and national identity.

In conjunction with the exhibi-

tion, the Durham chose the following three topics for the Scholars in Schools program: (1) student involvement in the civil rights movement in the 1950s and '60s; (2) the Kennedy assassination and how America might have been transformed if he had lived; and (3) the evolution of transportation. According to Peters, the Durham had already selected prestigious scholars for the first two topics and was

looking for someone with expertise in the third category. They contacted NDOR Director John Craig, who recommended Peters, because of his keen interest in history, past experience with historical presentations and more than 30 years experience in transportation.

Once he was selected, Peters began a long period of research, compiling information and putting together his presentation, from March until November. Besides extensive reading on the subject, he utilized a variety of resources, including primary sources that showcased Nebraska's story. Among the sources were NDOR's archives, the Durham's historical vaults and archives, and the Lincoln Journal Star's archives. Peters noted that help he received from NDOR's Communication Division was indispensable in making his presentation polished and professional. He gave special acknowledgements to Division Manager Mary Jo Oie, Mary Neben, Jack Rosecrans, Jan Havranek, Jim Pester, Clint Mangen and Arvid Olson.

Peters gave his educational presentation, titled "Destiny's Corridor: the Great Platte River Road" from November 11-13. He gave the presentation nine times within three days: once at the Durham, once to civil engineering students at

UNO, twice to construction management students at the Peter Kiewit Institute, three times to classes at Bellevue West High School and twice to students at a middle school in Blair.

Peters said speaking to so many groups in such a short timeframe was intense but rewarding. Other major challenges included condensing a lot of material into a one-hour presentation and making the information



Randy Peters

interesting and accessible for this age group, without reciting a lot of facts and figures.

"The goal was to present it in story form with a main character, which in this case was former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, because he was probably the single most responsible individual for building the

interstate system. We also told the story from the point of view of others involved with the project, including the engineers who built it and those affected by it, including the homeowner in the path of the interstate, but the Eisenhower story was the great overarching theme or story."

Peters said the story was a compelling one that he was eager to share with the students. He noted it was important to bring to their attention that the interstate, while often taken for granted, is the biggest public works project ever undertaken in history.

"I told the students this was a pay-as-you-go project that was almost like a gift from the earlier generations. It had excess capacity and it made our lives better. I challenged them to consider what lies ahead for the 21st century transportation system. Are we going to have as bold of a vision going forward?"

While much more time-consuming than he anticipated, Peters said his experience was well worth the effort.

"This was an opportunity to showcase, at the national level, the importance of the work that transportation professionals do. I had the opportunity to take it to the schools... I think the most rewarding thing was just to see students' interest sparked. They were engaged and asked a lot of questions. It was an opportunity to reach out to our future budding engineers." ♦

"This was an opportunity to showcase the importance of the work that transportation professionals do."

*- Randy Peters
Planning & Project Development Engineer*

Discovery Bridge over Missouri River One Year Ahead of Schedule

The Discovery Bridge, which crosses the Missouri River at South Yankton, Nebraska, and connects to Yankton, South Dakota, was dedicated and officially opened to traffic on October 11. More than 1,000 spectators and dignitaries were on hand to commemorate the event.

The \$24 million, four-lane bridge spans the Missouri at a length of 1,590 feet and is 74 feet wide. It crosses the Missouri over five piers and has 14 decorative spires. The 55-foot-tall spires are wired for lighting and extend across the bridge from Nebraska to South Dakota. It is the first time the tower design has been used on a bridge.

The Nebraska Department of Roads oversaw the project, completed by Jensen Construction of Des Moines, Iowa, one year ahead of schedule. Construction began in May of 2007. The completion date for the project was to be the fall of 2009. Excellent weather conditions were a major contributor to the early completion.

Under Budget, Ahead of Schedule

Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman congratulated the two states on their cooperative effort and successful completion of the bridge project a year ahead of schedule.

"The Discovery Bridge is officially opening a year ahead of schedule and under budget thanks to the work of the Nebraska Department of Roads, our partners across the border in South Dakota, and all the contractors and subcontractors involved in this project. This project ... is the perfect example of how we can work together," Governor Heineman said.

Other Nebraska officials attending the ribbon-cutting ceremonies included NDOR Director John Craig and State Highway Commissioner John Kingsbury. South Dakota officials included Senator John Thune, Senator Tim Johnson, Representative Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, Transportation Secretary Darin Bergquist, State Highway Commissioner Ralph Marquardt and Yankton Mayor Dan Specht.

Because of the cultural impact of the new bridge on the two states, area school children were included in the opening ceremony, with a third-grade student from Nebraska and one from South Dakota present to help cut the ribbon. Yankton resident Dave Spencer, who submitted the winning name for the bridge, was in the first car to officially cross the bridge after the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Top - Nebraska State Highway Commissioner John Kingsbury (third from left) and NDOR Director John Craig (fourth from left) joined dignitaries from South Dakota in cutting the ceremonial ribbon opening the Discovery Bridge. Thousands of people were on hand to celebrate.



Left - NDOR Director John Craig joined other dignitaries, including Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman (seated front row, left of podium), for the dedication of the Discovery Bridge on October 11.

Photos by Jay Bailey



Photo by Bob Wiebelhaus, District 3 Project Manager

A view of the Discovery Bridge looking to the southwest. The bridge crosses the Missouri over five piers and features 14 decorative spires, the first time this design has been used on a bridge.

Twenty Years of Efforts

The bridge's completion is the culmination of nearly 20 years of efforts by community members. Momentum for the project built in 2001 when the City of Yankton formed the Building Yankton's Bridge Committee to spearhead the effort. The diverse group of bridge boosters from Nebraska and South Dakota worked together to gain funding for the project.

In addition to the local leadership needed to get the project going, several organizations at all levels of government were included in the planning process, including the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, National Wildlife Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The bridge replaces the old Meridian Bridge, which was built in 1924 and served as a link between Nebraska and South Dakota for 84 years. The double-decked bridge had deteriorated over the years but is now scheduled to be converted by the community of Yankton into a pedestrian/bicycling path. ♦

Discovery Bridge

Project No. DPS-NH-81-4(113)

Letting Date: May 2, 2007

Start Date: June 16, 2007

Contract Time: 881 Calendar Days

From Start to Ribbon Cutting: 484 Days
(project is not complete)

Bid Total: \$23,903,498.78

NDOR District 3

District Engineer: Kris Winter

Construction Engineer: Pat Boyle

Assistant Construction Engineer: Rob Davis

Project Manager: Robert J. Wiebelhaus

Inspectors: Mark Droppers, Dale Lange,
Brett Mainquist, Matt Samuelson

Environmental Compliance Officer:
Scott Brummond

Bridge Design – NDOR

Steel Design: Vince Koenig, Scott Milliken,
Ron Schreiner, Dan Sharp

Alternate Concrete Design: Dennis Boyd,
Pat Haecker, Fouad Jaber, Dennis Vodicka

Hydraulic Analysis: Don Jisa

Planning & Proj. Development – NDOR

Contributors: Dawn Knott, Steve McBeth,
Mark Ottemann, Leonard Sand, Cindy Veys,
Rex Wilson

Geotech Analysis

Consultant: Kleinfelder

NDOR: Jordan Larsen, Omar Qudus

Roadway Design

Consultant: HDR - Omaha, NE

NDOR: John Baker, Tony Kessler, Mike Owen

South Dakota

Area Engineer: Ron Peterson

Engineering Supervisor: Rod Gall

Prime Contractor:

Jensen Construction Company
Des Moines, IA

Subcontractors:

AC Lightning Protection, Inc.

West Point, NE

A & R Construction

Plainview, NE

Commercial Asphalt

Mitchell, SD

Commercial Contractors Equipment, Inc.

Lincoln, NE

Derr Painting Company

Webster, TX

Dormark Construction Company

Grimes, IA

Dustrol, Inc.

Lincoln, NE

Fox Trenching Service

Tilden, NE

Highway Technologies, Inc.

Sioux Falls, SD

Horizontal Boring & Tunneling Co.

Exeter, NE

Linhart Construction, Inc.

Omaha, NE

Midwest Fence Co.-Guardrail Systems, Inc.

Ralston, NE

Muth Electric, Inc.

Mitchell, SD

Tristate Seeding, Inc.

Omaha, NE

Major Suppliers:

Concrete:

Concrete Materials - Yankton, SD

Hartington Concrete - Hartington, NE

Resteel:

Sioux City Foundry - Sioux City, IA

Girders:

PDM Bridge - Eau Claire, WI

Towers:

Enterprise Precast Concrete - Omaha, NE

NDOR Highway Improvement Projects Currently Under Contract

Information from Trans•port SiteManager as of November 12, 2008

Location
Work Description
Prime Contractor
Project Manager
Contract Bid Amount

Key:

Aggregate - Agg
Bituminous - Bit
Bridge - Br
Building - Bldg
Concrete Pavement - ConPav
Culverts - Culv
Electrical - Elec
Grading - Gr
Guardrail - Gdrl
Landscaping - LS
Mechanically Stabilized Earth - MSE
Seeding - Seed
Speciality - Spec

District 1

Tecumseh North
Bit
Pavers Companies
Vanroekel, Kirk (402)483-5466
\$323,168.84

Ulysses Northeast
Bridge
Christensen Bros., Inc.
Cowles, Scott (402)443-4661
\$417,560.65

Johnson Southeast
Bridge
L.J. Webb Contractor, Inc.
Walton, Jade (402)421-1717
\$652,702.76

Beatrice - Princeton
Spec
Safety Grooving & Grinding, L.P.
Vandegrift, Allen (402)729-3489
\$1,601,778.05

Weeping Water North & South
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,
Br, Gdrl, Elec
Constructors, Inc.
Hitzeman, Don (402)335-4131
\$10,894,723.90

Weeping Water Spur
Bit
U.S. Asphalt Co.
Hitzeman, Don (402)335-4131
\$423,415.26

N-63 Interchange
Gr, MSE, ConPav, Culv, Seed,
Br, Gdrl, Fence, Elec, Sign
Hawkins Construction Co.
Sidiqi, Abdul (402)471-0850
\$9,165,909.38

Platte River Bridges
Gr, MSE Wall, ConPav, Culv,
Seed, Br, Gdrl, Fence, Sign, Elec
Hawkins Construction Co.
Knutson, Dewaine (402)471-0850
\$45,189,781.90

Mainline EB Bridge Waverly Intchg.
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,
Br, Gdrl, Elec, Sign
Hawkins Construction Co.
Knutson, Dewaine (402)471-0850
\$6,135,087.75

Liberty Spur Bridge
Br
Wilke Contracting Corp.
Cary, Bill (402)335-4131
\$104,007.88

I-180 - 56th St., Lincoln
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,
Br, Gdrl, Fence, Elec, Sign
Dobson Brothers Const. Co.
& United Contractors Inc. (JV)
Sanburn, Bob (402)471-0850
\$48,766,667.84

US-77 S. Intchg. to I-180, Lincoln
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed, Br,
Gdrl, Fence, Elec, Sign
Dobson Brothers Const. Co.
& Affiliates
England, Jim (402)471-0850
\$28,886,121.30

Lincoln East
Spec
Martin Resource Mgmt. Corp.
Preble, Rodger (402)471-0850
\$344,271.26

Ashland Viaduct
Gr, Br, Gdrl, Elec
MCC, Llc
Preble, Rodger (402)471-0850
\$1,034,950.90

202nd St. Bridge
Gr, MSE, Culv, Br, Gdrl, Fence
Hawkins Construction Co.
Preble, Rodger (402)471-0850
\$2,329,976.25

148th St. Bridge, Lincoln
Gr, MSE, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit
Commercial Construction, Inc.
Traudt, Bob (402)471-0850
\$2,875,439.22

162nd St. Bridge, Lincoln
Gr, MSE, Culv, Br, Gdrl
Commercial Construction, Inc.
Traudt, Bob (402)471-0850
\$2,231,520.32

Greenwood Maintenance Facility
Maintenance Facility
Cheever Const. Co.
Murrillo, Ernest (402)471-0850
\$1,455,900.00

Lincoln West
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,
Br, Gdrl, Elec
Dobson Brothers Const. Co.
& Affiliates
Hobelman, Ryan (402)471-0850
\$12,430,182.09

Morse Bluff South Bridge
Gr, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit
A.M. Cohron & Son, Inc.
Hobelman, Ryan (402)471-0850
\$892,971.81

Roca North
Spec
Missouri Pvm. Maintenance, Inc.
Hobelman, Ryan (402)471-0850
\$24,779.00

Jct. US-34/N-43 near Eagle
Elec
Watts Electric Company
Masud, Yusaf, M. (402)471-0850
\$15,358.40

Raymond South
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Elec, Bit
Dobson Brothers Const. Co.
& Affiliates
Kuehn, Joseph (402)471-0850
\$4,816,393.42

I-80 - Cornhusker Hwy., Lincoln
Spec
Interstate Improvement, Inc.
Volz, Jason (308)345-8490
\$1,211,367.10

District 2

Bennington Southwest
Gr, Br, Gdrl, Bit
Christensen Bros., Inc.
Ruff, Ryan (402)444-6372
\$578,833.62

Fremont East Bypass
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,
Br, Gdrl, Fence, Elec, Sign
Werner Construction, Inc.
Veverka, Frank (402)727-3292
\$26,555,563.32

In Fremont
Bit
Western Engineering Co., Inc.
Veverka, Frank (402)727-3292
\$392,553.25

Harney St. - 24th St. (EB), Omaha
Gr, MSE, ConPav, Culv,
Br, Gdrl, Fence, Elec, Sign
Hawkins Construction Co.
Baehr, Dennis (402)595-2534
\$14,628,136.26

Gretna - Q St.
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,
Br, Gdrl, Elec
Chas. Vrana & Son Const. Co.
Farivari, Mo (402)595-2534
\$12,569,244.55

Jct. US-6/US-275
Elec
Commonwealth Electric Co.
of the Midwest
Farivari, Mo (402)595-2534
\$112,500.20

Jct. N-50/N-66 S. of Louisville
Elec
Watts Electric Company
Farivari, Mo (402)595-2534
\$10,360.10

108th St. - 120th St., Omaha
LS
Lanoha Nurseries, Inc.
Farivari, Mo (402)595-2534
\$468,974.00

I-80 - Dewey St., Omaha
Bit
U.S. Asphalt Co.
Khalaf, Zahi (402)595-2534
\$4,621,002.26

Fort St. South, Omaha
Bit
U.S. Asphalt Co.
Khalaf, Zahi (402)595-2534
\$2,716,030.66

N-50 to Bellevue
Spec
Chester Bross Const. Co./
C.B. Equipment, Inc.
Khalaf, Zahi (402)595-2534
\$1,271,372.66

84th St. Off Ramp (WB), Omaha
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Elec
Tab Holding Company, Inc.,
dba Tab Construction
Weander, Marty (402)595-2534
\$480,531.31

L St. Viaduct near 36th St.
Br
Chas. Vrana & Son Const. Co.
Weander, Marty (402)595-2534
\$958,486.58

Expand I-80 EB & Kennedy SB
One Lane & Bridges
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Br,
Gdrl, Elec, Sign
Hawkins Construction Co.
Fisher, Rick (402)595-2534
\$14,986,342.61

Riverview Bridge, Omaha
Gr, ConPav, Br
Hawkins Construction Co.
Fisher, Rick (402)595-2534
\$1,588,542.33

Plattsmouth Bridge Rehab.
ConPav, Culv, Br, Gdrl, Elec
Hawkins Construction Co.
Fox, Mike (402)595-2534
\$1,973,989.80

Plattsmouth North Viaducts
Br
Hawkins Construction Co.
Fox, Mike (402)595-2534
\$3,083,812.28

Hooper East & West
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,
Br, Gdrl, Elec, Sign
Werner Construction, Inc.
Jacobs, Micky (402)727-3292
\$22,401,622.91

Arlington East
Spec
Knish Corporation
Jacobs, Micky (402)727-3292
\$509,869.62

North Bend North
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Elec
M.E. Collins Contracting Co., Inc.
Jacobs, Micky (402)727-3292
\$2,434,060.84

CNW/N-36 Viaduct, Omaha
Br, Gdrl
MCC, Llc
Kuehner, Chris (402)595-2534
\$467,707.07

N-36 North
Bit
Western Engineering Co., Inc.
Kuehner, Chris (402)595-2534
\$1,086,110.06

Melia Hill Maintenance Facility
Maintenance Facility
Upland Construction Co.
Kuehner, Chris (402)595-2534
\$2,450,000.00

West Dodge Road (WB) Expressway
Bridge 108th - 120th
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Br,
Spec, Elec, Sign
Hawkins Construction Co.
Zelensky, Rich (402)595-2534
\$62,989,885.92

S. Omaha Br., Main Bridge Truss
Br
Jensen Construction Co.
Zelensky, Rich (402)595-2534
\$37,574,397.00

S. Omaha Br., Iowa Bridge Approach
Br, Elec
Commercial Construction, Inc.
Zelensky, Rich (402)595-2534
\$13,204,975.78

S. Omaha Br., Iowa Grading
Gr, Culv, Seed, Fence, Elec, Bit
K & L Landscape & Const., Inc.
Tsvid, Aleksandra (402)595-2534
\$3,499,546.34

S. Omaha Br., Nebr.-13th & Mo. Ave.
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed, LS, Elec
Hawkins Construction Co.
Hinche, Maurice (402)595-2534
\$5,262,446.49

S. Omaha Br., Nebr. Br. Approach
Gr, Br, Gdrl, Elec
Hawkins Construction Co.
Hinche, Maurice (402)595-2534
\$12,773,897.12

District 3

Willow Creek Recreation Rd.
Gr, Culv, Seed, Bit
Western Engineering Co., Inc.
Vanroekel, Kirk (402)483-5466
\$6,606,703.68

Waterbury Southwest
Gr, Br, Gdrl
Dixon Construction Co.
Mead, Terry (402)371-6416
\$476,373.40

Belden South
Seed, Elec, Bit
Werner Construction, Inc.
Francis, Jeff (402)375-7071
\$1,270,833.28

US-20 to Coleridge
Bit
U.S. Asphalt Co.
Francis, Jeff (402)375-7071
\$916,929.65

Emerson - North of Wakefield
Bit
Werner Construction, Inc.
Francis, Jeff (402)375-7071
\$2,045,838.44

District 3 - Districtwide
Bridge
Herbst Construction, Inc.
Francis, Jeff (402)375-7071
\$119,265.00

Jct. N-16/N-51 near Bancroft
Elec
Watts Electric Company
Francis, Jeff (402)375-7071
\$15,246.40

Traffic Signals, Norfolk
Elec
Dominion Construction Co.
Mainquist, Bill (402)370-3470
\$143,331.59

Monowi - Verdel
Gr, Culv, Seed, Gdrl, Bit
Werner Construction, Inc.
Becker, Roger (402)254-6552
\$2,257,733.09

Jct. N-84/N-121 East of Bloomfield
Elec
Dominion Construction Co.
Becker, Roger (402)254-6552
\$13,855.23

Hartington Maintenance Facility
Maintenance Facility
Radec Construction Co. Inc.
Becker, Roger (402)254-6552
\$411,026.00

Humphrey Spur South
Spec
Missouri Pvm. Maintenance, Inc.
Anderson, David (402)564-5751
\$120,164.60

Humphrey North & South
Bit
Paulsen, Inc.
Anderson, David (402)564-5751
\$1,898,877.52

Columbus Viaduct
Gr, MSE, ConPav, Culv, Br, Elec
Cramer & Associates, Inc.
Anderson, David (402)564-5751
\$12,941,875.76

Albion Equipment Storage Facility
Equipment Storage Facility
J.H. Hesse Company, Inc.
Trosper, Steven (402)564-5751
\$286,643.00

Columbus - Norfolk
Spec
American Civil Constructors, Inc.
& Subsidiary
Trosper, Steven (402)564-5751
\$1,449,366.90

Jct. N-32/N-121
Elec
Watts Electric Company
Trosper, Steven (402)564-5751
\$15,483.50

Yankton Bridge
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,
Br, Fence, Gdrl, Elec, Sign
Jensen Construction Co.
Wiebelhaus, Bob (402)254-6552
\$23,903,498.78

Norfolk West
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,
Br, Gdrl, Elec
Werner Construction, Inc.
Schulz, Ron (402)370-3474
\$20,299,017.48

Neligh - N-121
Gr, Seed, Gdrl, Bit
Werner Construction, Inc.
Lollman, Doug (402)370-3474
\$6,624,518.65

Elgin - US-20
Gr, Seed, Gdrl, Bit
Knife River Midwest, Llc
Lollman, Doug (402)370-3474
\$6,365,861.91

US-275/Industrial Rd., Norfolk
ConPav
M.E. Collins Contracting Co., Inc.
Lollman, Doug (402)370-3474
\$43,901.03

Wisner - West Point
Spec
Missouri Pvm. Maintenance, Inc.
Lollman, Doug (402)370-3474
\$141,000.00

Randolph West
Spec
Knish Corporation
Whitten, Bill (402)370-3474
\$361,166.65

Jct. U.S.-81/N-98 East of Pierce
Elec
Dominion Construction Co.
Whitten, Bill (402)370-3474
\$26,477.19

District 4

Milligan Northwest
Gr, Culv, Gdrl
L.J. Webb Contractor, Inc.
Vanroekel, Kirk (402)483-5466
\$278,453.18

Oak Northwest
Gr, Br, Gdrl
L.J. Webb Contractor, Inc.
Walton, Jade (402)421-1717
\$977,145.82

Kearney West
Bit
Werner Construction, Inc.
Kohmetscher, Lyle (402)462-1996
\$5,086,203.99

Deshler East & West
Bit
Constructors, Inc.
Kohmetscher, Lyle (402)462-1996
\$1,889,979.89

In Sutton
Elec
Mid-Plains Power, Inc.
Kohmetscher, Lyle (402)462-1996
\$94,533.42

L-50A - 11th St., Kearney
Gr, Culv, Br, Gdrl, Bit
Werner Construction, Inc.
Farber, Tom (308)865-5434
\$2,223,460.62

Platte River - Phillips
Gr, Seed, Gdrl, Bit
Vontz Paving, Inc.
Farber, Tom (308)865-5434
\$5,397,938.95

Cairo - Boelus
Gr, Culv, Seed, Gdrl, Elec, Bit
Werner Construction, Inc.
Kwiatkowski, Rick (308)754-5411
\$4,186,132.20

BNSF Viaduct, York
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Br, Elec
Constructors, Inc.
Grooms, Jerry (402)362-5934
\$1,261,361.00

In York
Gr, Seed, Gdrl, Bit
Paulsen, Inc.
Grooms, Jerry (402)362-5934
\$2,837,477.68

NE/KS Line North
Spec
Interstate Improvement, Inc.
Grooms, Jerry (402)362-5934
\$1,699,261.98

E. Jct. N-92 North
Bit
Knife River Midwest, Llc
Anderson, Tom (402)362-5934
\$3,442,781.50

Gresham - Shelby
Gr, Br, Gdrl, Bit
U.S. Asphalt Co.
Anderson, Tom (402)362-5934
\$3,803,098.45

Henderson - Waco
Spec
Interstate Improvement, Inc.
Nordhues, Bob (308)385-6265
\$807,561.00

Grand Island Doc Addition
DOC Addition
Lacy Construction Co.
Sander, Gary (308)385-6265
\$705,000.00

Aurora - Central City
Gr, Culv, Seed, Gdrl, Elec, Bit
Werner Construction, Inc.
Weber, Kirk (308)385-6888
\$8,584,360.49

Ord - Burwell
Gr, Culv, Seed, Elec, Bit
Werner Construction, Inc.
Woodgate, Gerald (308)385-6888
\$8,121,354.49

Grant St. - Greenwich St.,
Grand Island
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Elec
Paulsen, Inc.
Gripenstroh, Scott (308)385-6888
\$4,495,070.38

Dist. 4 - Districtwide
Spec
Garcia-Chicoine Enterprises, Inc.
Schmidt, Larry (308)385-6888
\$184,274.00

Kearney/Adams Co. Line East
Gr, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Elec, Bit
Vontz Paving, Inc.
Meyer, Steve (402)462-1996
\$4,004,587.38

In Hastings
Elec
Mid-Plains Power Inc.
Meyer, Steve (402)462-1996
\$183,611.60

District 5

NE/SD Line South (Resurf.)
Gr, Seed, Gdrl, Bit
Paulsen, Inc.
Carnahan, Brian (308)432-6144
\$2,184,855.04

US-20/Whitney Spur (S23A)
Elec
Dominion Construction Co.
Carnahan, Brian (308)432-6144
\$13,364.92

Gering Maintenance Facility
Maintenance Facility
Heggen Construction, Inc.
Rhamy, Wayne (308)436-6587
\$4,294,341.46

Sidney EB & WB Rest Area Rehab.
Rest Area Rehab
Simon Contractors & Subsidiaries
Rhamy, Wayne (308)436-6587
\$683,800.00

Bushnell - Kimball
Bit
Paulsen, Inc.
Rhamy, Wayne (308)436-6587
\$1,792,433.98

Sidney North
Bit
Werner Construction, Inc.
Johnson, James (308)436-6587
\$3,389,182.00

I-80 to North of Kimball
Gr, MSE, Culv, Seed, Br
Commercial Construction, Inc.
Johnson, James (308)436-6587
\$12,243,690.00

Automated Gate Closure Proj.-Rural
Elec
Mid-Plains Power, Inc.
Thomsen, Toby (308)535-8033
\$184,787.45

District 6

Brady Southeast
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit
A.M. Cohron & Son, Inc.
Robertson, Ramsy (402)421-1717
\$634,464.24

Hershey Interchange
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Br, Gdrl, Elec
Paulsen, Inc.
Morrell, Richard (308)535-8033
\$3,579,660.12

Sutherland - Hershey
Spec
Safety Grooving & Grinding, L.P.
Thomsen, Toby (308)535-8033
\$1,175,448.65

Darr - Overton
Spec
Safety Grooving & Grinding, L.P.
Thomsen, Toby (308)535-8033
\$1,800,668.93

Ogallala EB & WB Rest Area Rehab.
Rest Area Rehab
Paulsen, Inc.
Thomsen, Toby (308)535-8033
\$447,420.00

Thedford South
Gr, Bit
Werner Construction, Inc.
Thomsen, Toby (308)535-8033
\$4,627,371.44

N. Jct. N-23 North
Gr, Culv, Bit
Western Engineering Co., Inc.
Sawyer, Harlan (308)535-8033
\$3,568,196.64

Cozad Interchange
Gr, MSE, ConPav, Br, Gdrl, Elec
Paulsen, Inc.
Brinker, Gary (308)535-8033
\$4,595,440.50

Monroe St. to I-80, Cozad
Gr, ConPav, Culv
Paulsen, Inc.
Brinker, Gary (308)535-8033
\$486,731.45

Cozad South
Gr, Seed, Gdrl, Bit
Paulsen, Inc.
Brinker, Gary (308)535-8033
\$386,734.99

Darr Interchange
Elec
Watts Electric Company
Brinker, Gary (308)535-8033
\$216,824.00

District 6 - Districtwide
Spec
Garcia-Chicoine Enterprises, Inc.
Lewandowski, Daniel (308)535-8033
\$389,031.50

District 7

McCook Southwest
Br
Simon Contractors & Subsidiaries
Dicenta, Gary (308)345-3710
\$445,619.24

Hendley Southeast
Culv
Wilke Contracting Corp.
Krajewski, Anthony (308)995-6677
\$128,169.16

Beaver City Northeast
Gr, Br, Gdrl
Wilke Contracting Corp.
Krajewski, Anthony (308)995-6677
\$269,782.48

Stockville Southwest
Br
The Diamond Engineering Co.
Krajewski, Anthony (308)995-6677
\$468,755.44

Republican City Southeast
Br
L.J. Webb Contractor, Inc.
Krajewski, Anthony (Toney)
(308)995-6677
\$237,033.01

In McCook
Spec
Paul Reed Const. & Supply, Inc.
Collins, Duane (308)345-8490
\$149,216.01

In Minden
Spec
Paul Reed Const. & Supply, Inc.
Sell, Tim (308)995-5397
\$81,414.38

In Orleans & West
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit
Werner Construction, Inc.
Dietz, Mark (308)995-5397
\$6,475,503.61

Holdrege Maintenance Facility-
Bldg. # 71406, 71407, 71408
Maintenance Facility
Paulsen, Inc.
Dietz, Mark (308)995-5397
\$2,705,000.00

Benkelman North
Gr, Culv, Seed, Bit
Midlands Contracting, Inc.
Doyle, Kelly (308)345-8490
\$253,820.17

District 8

Naper South
Gr, Culv, Seed
Pruss Excavation Co.
Vanroekel, Kirk (402)483-5466
\$325,010.99

Burwell East
Bit
Paulsen, Inc.
Colfack, Gene (402)336-2051
\$1,789,007.01

O'Neill Maintenance Facility
Maintenance Facility
DWB, Inc.
Colfack, Gene (402)336-2051
\$1,030,718.00

Niobrara River Bridge
Br
Herbst Construction, Inc.
Colfack, Gene (402)336-2051
\$64,800.00

Merriman South Bridge
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit
Perrett Construction, Ltd.
Gustafson, Jay (402)376-1352
\$4,898,412.25

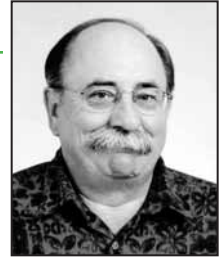
In O'Neill
Gr, ConPav, Elec
Castle Construction, Inc.
Ziska, Dan (402)336-2051
\$2,099,919.62

Districtwide, D-3 & D-8
Spec
Garcia-Chicoine Enterprises, Inc.
Adkisson, Jason (402)387-2471
\$275,711.14



By Steve Duecker

Highway Environmental Biologist
Planning & Project Development



Armadillo

In the last few years, armadillos have been reported in Nebraska, with two found here in Lincoln. Unfortunately, both of these specimens were DOR (Dead On Road). Armadillos have poor eyesight and the reflex of jumping in the air two to three feet when surprised by predator (car), which puts them in a bad spot. The name "armadillo" is derived from Spanish and means "little armored one."

Armadillos are mammals and do not hibernate. Until our recent mild winters, this confined them to the southern U.S. and Mexico. Their range has been gradually extending north with some reported in the Nebraska Sandhills. They are active mainly at night and feed on insects, grubs and earthworms. Occasionally they will eat vegetation or fungi, also.

The Nine-banded Armadillo is the species found in Nebraska. They cannot curl completely in a ball like some South American species can. They generally run from predators and get to their burrow. In Texas several of us tried to catch one; all I can say is they are much faster than they look. In that part of the country they will run into a clump of cactus to escape. The armor, which is bone covered with horn, protects them from the spines.

During the Great Depression, armadillos were eaten and referred to as "Hoover pigs" because of President Hoover's undelivered promises of food for everyone. It is said they taste like a combination of shrimp and, of course, chicken.

Armadillos only have primitive peg-like teeth; they do have re-curved claws on the toes for digging and rooting. The armor plating makes them so heavy that they will sink in water, but they have the ability to fill their stomach with air so they will float and swim quite well. They can also hold their breath for up to six minutes. Armadillos have been observed walking across the bottom of streams while holding their breath.

Nine-banded Armadillos always have four identical young; one egg splits into four individual embryos. If you see an armadillo (especially a live one) call Mike Fritz (Nebraska Game and Parks Commission) at 402-471-5419. It is best not to handle it yourself, they can carry leprosy.



We Get Mail...

October 28, 2008

Dear Mr. John Craig,

On behalf of the Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee, I would like to thank your department for the hard work and dedication it took to make the Discovery Bridge linking southeast South Dakota and northeast Nebraska a reality. Our present committee members, as well as many that preceded us, worked diligently over the course of many years to keep this project alive and see it through to completion.

It was a pleasure to work with you, members of your staff, the South Dakota Department of Transportation and Jensen Construction on this project. This project will link our states and region together for many years to come and will provide many benefits and opportunities in the future.

Please accept our congratulations on a well-run project. Under budget and ahead of schedule is a statement not very often heard in this industry. Please pass along our gratitude to your staff as well.

Sincerely,

Brad Wenande

Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce

The Department of Roads receives numerous complimentary letters. The letters printed here are representative of those often sent praising the many fine and deserving employees of the Department of Roads.



Approval Rating *(cont'd. from page 5)*

time. NDOR employees were also found to be courteous. Among those who had contact with an employee, 95% considered them to be very or somewhat courteous (including 59% who rated employees as very courteous).

How important is the impression an NDOR employee makes to the overall rating? An in-depth analysis showed a very strong link between responses given on the overall impression of NDOR employees and responses given on NDOR's overall image. In other words, those respondents with a favorable impression of NDOR employees are more likely to have a positive image of NDOR. So, keep up the good work!

The full report, including detailed results on the above questions as well as the results on additional questions asked in the survey, can be downloaded from the NDOR website at www.transportation.nebraska.gov/performance/index.htm. ♦



Photo by Laura Howell

NDOR Participates in Touch-A-Truck Event

Children of all ages got to see a Department of Roads snowplow up close at the second annual Touch-A-Truck event October 18 in Omaha. The event, which is a benefit for the Child Saving Institute, was free to families and featured an exposition of vehicles and activities, giving the children an opportunity to meet the people who operate the vehicles.

Patrick Howell, Highway Maintenance Worker at District 2 in Omaha, (pictured, center) volunteered his time on a Saturday to hand out hundreds of NDOR coloring books and give a boost to many children who wanted to sit in the driver's seat of the snowplow and blow its air horn. This was the first year NDOR was represented at the event.

There were at least 50 vehicles, including fire trucks, police cars, limousines, race cars, military vehicles, semi-trucks, construction equipment and a helicopter. More than 2,500 people attended the event.

Child Saving Institute (CSI) is dedicated to the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. CSI has met the changing needs for children in the Omaha metro area based on the belief that children are the community's most valuable resource. ♦



Take Charge of Your Health



By Carol Marshall, RN

The health care system today is not perfect. Finding a primary care provider that you are comfortable with and who is there when needed may be a difficult task. Insurance choices are confusing and hospital systems may be intimidating. When it comes to your health, **you** are your own best advocate. The following are reasons why you need to take charge of your health.

1. The experts can't fix everything. The health care system (drugs, providers and hospitals) affects only about 10 percent of our health. The remaining 90 percent of health outcomes are determined by factors over which health care providers have little or no control, such as lifestyle choices, social conditions and physical environment. Take steps to enhance your own well-being by using available resources such as local health clubs, neighborhood walking paths or local chapters of the American Red Cross, American Heart Association and American Cancer Society, just to name a few. Local health fairs may provide simple health screenings or informational classes on diet, diseases or stress management.

2. Health care costs are rising. This is not news to anyone, but did you know that some of the increases are due to choices? Lifestyle-related diseases such as Type II diabetes caused by obesity are increasing and driving up costs. The leading causes of disease and death in the United States are due to behaviors: tobacco use, poor diet, physical inactivity and alcohol abuse. By taking charge of your own health and doing your part to stay healthy, you can help reduce health care costs.

3. The health care system is not perfect. Medical errors can have severe consequences. It is important to do what you can to minimize mistakes. Keep a health file updated with your current allergies, medications and health history. Your pharmacist is a valuable resource for information about medications and possible side effects. Ask your health care provider for copies of pertinent lab

or x-ray results to keep with your records. If you switch health care providers, make sure your health records are transferred. If you or someone you love goes to the hospital, ask several questions: Are you receiving the correct medication? Have you verified that the correct procedure will be performed before you undergo anesthesia? Do you understand what tests or procedures are being done? Being an active participant in your care is your best action to avoid medical mistakes.

4. You deserve satisfaction. Are you pleased with your health care? Many people are not. Since doctor visits are often less than 15 minutes long, many patients don't feel listened to. We feel too rushed or are not given a chance to get answers to questions. As a health care consumer, you should be satisfied with the service you receive. This does not mean that your provider should never recommend a treatment, procedure or diagnosis you are not happy with; providers will treat you to the best of their abilities. However, taking charge of your health care will help reduce dissatisfaction. By asking questions, your provider will appreciate the fact that you want to be an active participant of your health care.

5. You need to explore all your options. Our health care system is not always effective in providing preventative health care or helping people deal with chronic disease. However, there are many educational books, magazines and websites that can help you be better informed and educated about your health care. Again, health fairs or information from local health agencies may provide valuable information. In some cases, complementary therapies such as biofeedback, guided imagery, meditation or massage may help reduce stress and improve overall health. Being aware of all possible options will help you make a better informed decision.

You are the one who can make the biggest impact on your own health. To maintain or improve your health, you need to make good lifestyle changes and get the best health care you can. Think about what you want out of your health care and become informed and involved. You will see the benefits and you will be doing your part to make a better health care system for everyone.



- * Use your cell phone responsibly. Don't dial and drive. Find a safe place to stop.
- * Stay 100 feet behind snowplows.
- * Turn off cruise control!
- * If snow is blowing, should you be going?

NDOR Events Calendar

— December —

National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

- 2 New Employee Orientation Program**
Rm. 152, 5001 S. 14th (the "Hill")
Contact DeWayne Morrow @ 476-3678
- 10 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Linda Wilson @ 479-3887
- 16 RoadToasters – Holiday Meeting**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact Linda Wilson @ 479-3887
- 18 Letting**
1:30 p.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact Liz Wunderlich @ 479-4528
- 19 Hwy. Commission Meeting**
10:00 a.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Shirley Schafer @ 479-4530
- 25 State Holiday – Christmas**

— January —

- 1 State Holiday – New Year's Day**
- 13 New Employee Orientation Program**
Rm. 152, 5001 S. 14th (the "Hill")
Contact DeWayne Morrow @ 476-3678
- 14 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Linda Wilson @ 479-3887
- 16 Bd. Public Roads Class & Stds.**
9:00 a.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 479-4436
- 19 State Holiday – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**
- 28 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Linda Wilson @ 479-3887

- 23 Bd. Examiners for Co. Hwy. & City Street Supts.**
10:00 a.m., NDOR Materials & Research Conference Rm.
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 479-4436
- 23 Hwy. Commission Meeting**
10:00 a.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Shirley Schafer @ 479-4530

— February —

- 5 Letting**
1:30 p.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact Liz Wunderlich @ 479-4528
- 10 New Employee Orientation Program**
Rm. 152, 5001 S. 14th (the "Hill")
Contact DeWayne Morrow @ 476-3678
- 11 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Linda Wilson @ 479-3887
- 16 State Holiday – Presidents' Day**
- 15-21 National Engineers Week**
www.eweek.org
- 20 Bd. Public Roads Class & Stds.**
9:00 a.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 479-4436
- 20 Bd. Examiners for Co. Hwy. & City Street Supts.**
10:00 a.m., NDOR Materials & Research Conference Rm.
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 479-4436
- 25 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Linda Wilson @ 479-3887
- 27 Hwy. Commission Meeting**
10:00 a.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Shirley Schafer @ 479-4530

If you would like a key event included on upcoming calendars, call the Communication Office 479-4512 or e-mail linda.wilson@nebraska.gov. Information for the February/March Roadrunner should be received by January 16.

Service Awards

Congratulations to these dedicated individuals for their work and continued service with the Department of Roads. They celebrate their service dates in *December and January*.

40 Years

Thomas Braun, Local Projects
Edward Cross, Roadway Design
Donald Jisa, Bridge

30 Years

Duane Bosak, District 4
Marlyn Buethe, District 2
Richard Cudaback, District 1
Steven Green, District 5
Corvin Hinrichs, District 8
Oneta Lambert, Right-of-Way
Burnell Nieuwenhuis Jr., District 8
Richard Tschirren, District 3
Rodney Wilson, District 4

20 Years

Robert Bettenhausen, Proj. Sched.
Chad Debusk, Roadway Design
David Ells, Right-of-Way

Christine Hansen, District 2
Debbie Nelson, BTSD
Teresa Oglesby, Controller

10 Years

John Buscher Jr., District 2
John Craig, Director's Office
Martin Gillen, District 5
Thomas Griffiths, District 3
John Hewen, District 4
Susan Larson, Human Resources
Kendall Stege, Construction
Cynthia Veys, Planing & Proj. Dev.
Lynn Wenzbauer, District 1